DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 619 CS 206 953

AUTHOR Folkerts, Jean Lange
TITLE Report on the Russians: An Analysis of the Controversy Surrounding William Lindsay White's 1945 Account of Russia.
PUB DATE Jul 82
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (65th, Athens, OH, July 25-28, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bias; Content Analysis; *Government Role; Information Needs; *International Relations; Journalism Education; *News Reporting; *Public Opinion; War
IDENTIFIERS *Media Bias; USSR; *White (William Lindsay)

ABSTRACT

During the summer of 1944, journalist William Lindsay White accompanied Eric Johnston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, to the Soviet Union. Early the next year White published an account of the trip, "Report on the Russians," which made the best seller lists, but which pleased few individuals and attracted a great deal of criticism. Much of the criticism accused White of being biased in his observations of the Russians, unfairly emphasizing poverty during wartime, and commenting unfavorably about industrial development under a communist regime. However, critics virtually ignored four major stories he released--stories which at that time had not been presented to the public eye but which in later years were acknowledged to be highly significant accounts. White's account and criticism raises issues of media objectivity and the role of the reporter during wartime. The focus on ideology rather than on events represented a desire for Americans to protect their national interests and to create an ideological consistency between the two great powers. Correspondents were trying to secure Russian trust and support in hope of breaking down tight censorship controls. There was also a need to promote Russian-American cooperation for world peace. Bill White's experience is a documentation of the strength of public opinion in volatile times and a reminder that the role of the press is not to promote ideological consistency or schism, nor to aid in government manipulation, but to clarify events and issues. (Author/HOD)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED218619

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.



# REPORT ON THE RUSSIANS

## An Analysis of the Controversy Surrounding William Lindsay White's 1945 Account of Russia

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jean Lange Folkerts

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

by

Jean Lange Folkerts
Department of Communication Arts
Washburn University
Topeka, Kansas

CS206953

Presented to the History Division at the Association for Education in Journalism Annual Convention in Athens, Ohio, July, 1982.

During the summer of 1944 William Lindsay White accompanied Eric Johnston, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, to the Soviet Union. Early the next year White published an account of the trip, Report on the Russians, which stayed on the best seller lists from March to September but which pleased few individuals and which attracted criticism from such diverse groups as the State Department, the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship, and foreign correspondents of the stature of John Hersey and Harrison Salisbury.[1] Even an old friend of his father's, on the staff of the Kansas City Star, questioned White about his sources,[2] and his editors were urged to stop publication of the Book. He received anonymous mail accusing him of having gotten his story from a bar in Casablanca, and the day after the book came out the White farmhouse in Pennsylvania was broken into and searched, with many papers being stolen while other valuables were not taken.[3]

Bill White, the son of Emporia's famous editor William Allen White, was not an unseasoned reporter. A 1924 Harvard graduate, at the age of 18 he had accompanied his father to the Versailles Peace Conference, had served on the staffs of the Washington Post and Fortune magazine, had been in England during 1940-41 as a correspondent, had published three popular war-time books, covered the Russo-Finnish War and was currently an editor of Reader's Digest.[4] White had been a popular writer and he and his wife, the former Kathrine Klinkenberg, of Time magazine, had moved socially in New York literary circles since their marriage in 1931.[5] But if one was to believe the reviews, particularly those

of the New York press, White, had, with a few strokes of his pen, transformed himself from a credible war correspondent to a Russian red-baiter.

Since White had not previously been a controversial figure, the major question is why did the book elicit such violent reaction. Was White's account dramatically distorted or did other factors underly the criticism? To answer these questions, consideration must be given to the sources of the controversy and the motivation of certain interest groups. Such an analysis is significant because it raises major questions about the interrelated issues of media objectivity and the role of the reporter during war-time. The clash of ideologies among White, his supporters and his critics was reflected in their coverage of the Russian front, and it is this clash of ideologies that becomes apparent throughout the controversy.

White's book received negative criticism from four major groups: 1) contemporary foreign correspondents and literary critics; 2) the Soviet-American Friendship Alliance; 3) high-ranking officials in the federal government, including some military personnel and 4) Eric Johnston. Positive comments came from 1) military personnel who had been intimately involved in a German raid on an American air base (Poltava) in Russia; 2) Russian emigrés; 3) segments of the midwestern press, and 4) former Russian admirers who had become disillusioned.

Much of the criticism accused White of being biased in his observations of the Russians, and his pro-capitalist bias is apparent throughout the book. However, in the scramble to interpret White's political ideology, critics virtually ignored four major stories he released--stories that had not been viewed by the public eye. When mentioned in the criticism, the stories were attacked as not being creditable journalistically. Yet in later years White's accounts of the

German air raid on Poltava, of slave labor, of the panic of Moscow and of the murder of Polish officers in the Katyn Forests were acknowledged to be highly significant accounts.[6] The controversy over the book centered on White's ideology rather than on the major stories he reported, stories which lost credibility because of their context. The purpose of this paper is to examine that loss of credibility and the ideologies of other correspondents and critics which prevented them from clearly evaluating White's reporting.

The focus on ideology rather than on events, which emanated from supporters as well as critics, reflected 1) a desire by Americans to protect their national interests (for some, this meant a need to create an ideological consistency between the two great powers who had become reluctant allies toward the end of World War II); 2) the personal and professional needs of correspondents to secure Russian trust and support in hope of breaking down tight censorship controls; and 3) the desire to promote Russian-American cooperation for world peace after the war. Critics of Report on the Russians--pro and con--visualized different approaches to accomplishing these objectives.

There is no doubt that the mass media during World War II, united in its opposition to Germany, was highly uncritical of recent Russian history.[7] John Lent has pointed out that "international news coverage and usage are often determined by considerations of international diplomacy, national government and military policies, and historical-cultural heritage."[8] During World War II the press expressed and promoted government and military perspectives, despite the fact that Soviet Russia and the United States had been on unfriendly terms in Russia since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Americans had even intervened in Russia in August of 1918 as part of an interallied military force,

claiming that Bolshevism "was a temporary madness that with a little effort could be stopped."[9] Although the U.S. officially recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, the Soviet invasion of Finland, acquisition of the Balkan States and the Soviet-Nazi Alliance of 1939 had done little to win the friendship and support of the American people.[10] By 1944, when White traveled to Russia, Americans had already been in conflict with Stalin over the concept of self-determination vs. Russian security needs, his insist nce on retaining Eastern European lands and his refusal to cooperate in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. However, many Americans in literary and political circles had convinced themselves that the Russians who could fight "so valiantly against a common enemy" must no longer be able to "espouse so repugnant a doctrine as communism."[11] Many believed Stalin had fundamentally changed his ideological orientation. Joseph E. Davies, American ambassador to the Soviet Union during 1937-38, wrote in Mission to Moscow in 1941 that "the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky--the Russia of the Bolshevik Revolution--no longer exists.[12] Davies claimed communism was based "on the same principle of the brotherhood of man which Jesus preached."[13] In 1943 Life magazine proclaimed that Russians "look like Americans, dress like Americans and think like Americans."[14] And in April of 1944, shortly after the publication of White's book, the New York Times said Marxist thinking was out in Russia and that the competitive system was back in.[15] "The uncritical descriptions of Russia which became so prevalent during World War II reflected the desire of those Americans sophisticated enough to concern themselves with contradictions in international affairs to find complete ideological consistency in the war aims of the anti-Axis coalition," notes historian John Lewis Gaddis.[16]

In this context, then, White's Report on the Russians represents an interesting case study of the impact of competing ideologies on the objectivity of war reporting. In addition, the need for cooperation between the two powers was an overwhelming consideration. Eric Johnston wrote, "I believe genuine two-way understanding between Russia and the United States is indispensable. Each nation must accept honest and frank criticism from the other. But each nation should strive to avoid unfair, destructive criticism of the other. We have got to learn to get along with Russia and the Russians have got to learn to get along with us. ."[17] Bruce Bliven wrote in the New Republic that White's book. . .

> must also be considered in its relation to the war with Germany and Japan. Hitler's one remaining hope is to split the Allies; I don't think he has much chance of succeeding, but it is important that those concerned for victory in this war should not help him. The Japanese war lords are hoping beyond everything else that when the European conflict is ended, Russia can somehow be prevented from entering the Oriental phase of the struggle. Whatever influence Bill White possesses he throws at this moment into the wrong side of the ledger.[18]

A review in the Annals of the American Academy noted that the writer was "disgusted" with White's book "since it is not likely to foster amical (sic) relations between the two nations."[19]

Soviet reaction also was critical. In its account of the Soviet newspaper Pravda's attack on the book, the Associated Press quoted commentator David Zaslavsky as labeling the book's conclusions "the usual stew from the Fascist kitchen" written by "an obscure American newspaperman of doubtful reputation."[20]

Another round of negative criticism came from the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship. Established in 1943, the Council included in its membership many individuals who were interested in maintaining the American-Soviet alliance such as Arthur Capper, Kansas senator on the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee; Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York; Federal Circuit Judge Learned Hand; progressive writer Harold L. Ickes; and Boston industrialist Hugh Cabot.[21] The New York World Telegram labeled the Council a "Red Pressure Group,"[22] and in early 1945, while trying to persuade Capper to resign from the group, White said the Council had been organized to circulate information favorable to the Soviet Union during the War. He noted that because of this "commendable purpose" Capper and a number of other prominent people had agreed to sponsor the organization, but that it had since expanded its role to include attacks on anyone critical of the U.S.S.R.[23] White told Capper the Council was presumed to be a group of average American citizens but in reality it was "intimately connected with the Soviet Consulate and Embassy," and was a powerful propaganda tool "directed entirely from Moscow and in violation of all their treaties with us."[24] In other correspondence, White described the council as a "fellow-traveler" organization, headed by Edwin Smith, whom Franklin Roosevelt had not reappointed as head of the Labor Board because of Smith's Communist sympathies.[25]

The Council approached the Anglo-American Correspondents Association with a petition in an attempt to get signatures against the book. It also published a 32-page booklet titled, "The Truth About W. L. White: The Book The Nazis Like." White received a letter by diplomatic pouch in March, 1945 from American attaché George Moorad, informing him about the campaign against his book. Moorad said the Association had received a telegram from Smith dated February 24, 1945, before the book was available. He said the telegram requested the Association to sign an enclosed statement individually or as a body. Since neither the articles, which had been published that December in Reader's Digest, nor the book were available in Russia, the Association cabled Smith stating that the signing of

such a statement was considered to be "outside the scope of this organization."[26] Moorad said the correspondents were afraid Soviet censorship would pass only condemnation of the book, so that if someone in Moscow "did approve of your piece, this fact could not be reported to the American-Soviet Friendship Council, and to attempt such a thing would invite reprisal."[27]

On the other hand, the statement issued by the Council and eventually signed by 16 writers expressed disagreement with the book, noting that while "none of us is satisfied with the limited facilities extended to us as reporters by the Soviet government, and none denies the truth of certain statements in Mr. White's book as condensed in Reader's Digest," the "peculiar but fundamental dishonesty" of the book lay in the total absence of either "foreground or background detail." The statement continued.

> We therefore, have no hesitation in saying that for Americans seeking understanding on the basis of real knowledge of Russia, in the hope of finding a common ground for living at peace with our neighbors, White's book must rank as a highly biased and misleading report, calculated to prolong the oldest myths and prejudices against a great ally, whose sacrifices in this war have saved us incalculable bloodshed and destruction.[28]

Among the signers of the petition were three especially well-known writers--Quentin Reynolds, Edgar Snow and John Hersey--and it was the inclusion of these three that particularly disturbed White. Others included Raymond Arthur Davies, a Canadian broadcaster who had headed the Young Communist League in Toronto; Alexander Werth, a British correspondent who worked for BBC and the Sunday Times, and who had been born in Leningrad; Ralph Parker, English writer for the Times, who was married to a Russian woman; Richard Lauterbach of Time magazine, who later was fired from Time and worked for a Communist newspaper; Ed Stevens, who had been a Russian correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor from 1934 to 1939 and who had married a Russian woman; and Ella Winter, former wife of Lincoln

Steffens.[29] The Council's 32-page booklet denouncing Report on the Russians focused exclusively on White's charges about lack of medical care, unsmiling Russians, shabbiness and poor dress. The booklet did not deal with slave labor, Poltava, Katyn Forest or the panic of Moscow.[30]

The Massachusetts branch of the Council, under the leadership of Dirk Struik, wrote to White's editor, Lambert Davis of Harcourt Brace, trying to persuade him to stop publication. Struik, in turn, wrote to the Reader's Digest, "We believe that the publication of such a book, would only help to increase the misunderstanding which exists in our country concerning the Soviet Union, and for that reason would be a negative contribution to the cause of American Soviet Friendship." Struik criticized White for his comments about shabby clothes and women with bad complexions and said that nowhere was there an attempt to explain "fundamental facts of Soviet industry and Soviet social life."[31] He claimed the Soviets had built a science and technology deserving great admiration and that White's claims about the inefficiency of Soviet industry were not true.[32] Kathrine White recalls that Davis answered the letter "head on," suggesting the Society read the book before criticizing it. Donald Brace, president of the company, backed his editor, saying that to have "tried to exercise control over his views or to have refused publication would have been to apply a particularly dangerous kind of censorship."[33] The Reader's Digest official response noted that White's interpretation was "but one of various interpretations of the Soviet Union that we have printed," and that other versions would be printed as well, "for we are fully convinced as you are of the importance of Russia in the postwar world and the vital need for mutual understanding between our two countries."[34]

Bill White received a variety of unsigned letters which followed the pattern of criticism designed by the councils. Similar phrases appeared in each letter, indicating they were the product of a mass letter-writing campaign. One example:

> You were an invited guest of the Soviet Union, were you not? And you went in there, accepted the very best they had to give, and then came home and sat down to write about their shabby clothes, dirty feet, big bosomed women, bad bathroom facilities, lacking vitamins, etc. -- instead of trying to understand the heroic spirit that was to carry the Read (sic) Army to the very heart of Germany. After reading your snarling conconction (sic) I do not wonder that the Russians do not want any more American reporters around. You certainly did a fine job not only in helping to close the door of the Soviet Union to American newspapermen, but in undermining the mutual trust and understanding between us and our Russian allies who suffered more than any other belligerent nation from the Nazi onslought.[35]

The reaction of the foreign correspondents who opposed White's books reflected not only the desire to protect American interests and to create ideological consistency between the Allies, but also their personal and professional needs to secure Russian trust and to break down some of the censorship barriers they faced. Like White, each correspondent had made personal, ideological choices based on his background and involvement in the Russian question.

In his retrospective analysis, The First Casualty, Philip Knightley contends that the Eastern Front was the most poorly covered front of the War. Correspondents were seldom allowed near the fighting and reports from the official spokesman, Abramavich Lozovsky, were often inaccurate and unreliable. Knightley cites the lack of information about the panic of Moscow, the Poltava raid, accounts of fifth column workers (those who were sympathetic to the Germans), and Katyn Forest as the greatest uncovered stories of the War. Knightley notes that partisan feelings were almost unavoidable because propaganda was so strong one either succumbed or became strongly

opposed to the Russian position. Alexander Werth, one of the correspondents who signed the petition against White, wrote of the Katyn Forest massacres after the war that "to suggest that the Russian case was as bad as Goebbel's case, or even worse, was something one couldn't do in wartime. It was imperative not to play into the German's hands."[36] Knightley describes Werth as one of the reporters who succumbed to Russian propaganda and who later was frank about his pro-Russian sentiments.[37]

White was most disturbed by the three signatures of Quentin Reynolds, Edgar Snow, and John Hersey because he regarded them as prominent enough to influence the public evaluation of the book.[38] Reynolds had covered the war in France and England and in 1942 accompanied Averill Harriman to Moscow as a press officer. Reynolds left Russia after a short period in protest against censorship there and later wrote "We were all anxious to glorify the heroes at the front"[39]--but, he added, nothing could break down the distrust Soviets had for the American and British press. Knightley notes that Reynolds, in an attempt to win Russian trust, wrote the English commentary for a Soviet propaganda film and acted as press attache for the three-power Moscow conference.[40]

Edgar Parks Snow was an associate editor of Saturday Evening Post during the war years, traveling through India and China, the Soviet Union, Iran, North Africa and Britain. He was in the Soviet Union during most of 1944. His book on the Soviet Union, China and India, People on Our Side, was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in 1944. Harrison Salisbury of the New York Times, in 1949 critiqued another Snow book on Russia, Stalin Must Have Peace, saying "His Study is the most penetrating analysis of the Soviet which has yet appeared in the American Press."[41]

John Hersey was born in China, traveled throughout the world with his parents as a child, and later was a secretary to Sinclair Lewis before becoming affiliated with Time and Life. By 1944 when Bill White went to Russia, Hersey had written three books on the war, one which won him the Pulitzer prize in 1945. Hersey worked at Time from 1937 until Luce fired him after his novel Hiroshima was published in the New Yorker. For several years Time staffers bet on Hersey as the most likely candidate to succeed Luce as editor-in-chief, even though Hersey and Luce were in frequent disagreement. Hersey, along with other correspondents, had been dismayed with the anti-Soviet cast their stories had acquired under the hands of Whittaker Chambers, on the Time foreign desk.[42] Hersey had opposed Chamber's handling of copy, which had been anything but pro-Soviet.

Hersey's review of Report on the Russians appeared with the reviews of four other nationally prominent men in Saturday Review of Literature. His major criticism expressed the familiar reluctance to criticize an ally, saying that White had chosen a poor time--"when the committed policy of our nation and of Great Britain is to try to find a modus vivendi with Russia"--to develop "an attitude of smug superiority."[43] Unlike many of the other reviewers of the book, Hersey did deal to some extent with the major stories which White reported. However, he accused White of quoting unreliable sources and making up the interview with the engineers who told the story of slave labor.[44] He claimed White had used the same unreliable source for the story of the panic of Moscow. Hersey dismissed the account of the Katyn Forest massacres as "obviously from sources sympathetic to the London Poles," and making "no pretense at being impartial; it sounds very much like the Berlin radio."[45] The criticism of this major portion of the book takes up perhaps a third of Hersey's review, while the rest focuses on White's bias in viewing the Russians and his focus on certain facts about old people and high prices.

Another correspondent who signed the document was Alexander Kendrick, who, like the anonymous letter-writer to Kathrine White, accused White of having gotten his story--particularly that of the Omsk engineers--from a bar in Casablanca. Kendrick had returned from Russia by April of 1945 in protest of not being provided facilities for adequate coverage of the war. He voiced concern that White had distorted facts and quoted disparaging remarks by foreign correspondents in Moscow out of context, thus impugning "their professional standing as competent reporters." Further, Kendrick contended, White cut "the ground from under the valid and constructive criticism of the Soviet Union which many of us have offered and which eventually should have led to better understanding." Behind White's "outward contempt," said Kendrick, was "fear that socialism in Russia is not failing but succeeding, that it challenges Western capitalism in spite of our shiny bathrooms, and clean sheets."[46]

Although he did not sign the Council petition, Harrison Salisbury, in Moscow at the time for United Press, was critical of the book, and wrote to White saying that if he had "blue-pencilled about a dozen flip cracks and hadn't pulled that foney about the 'omsk engineers' it would have been a much better book." White responded that the story about the engineers was not phony, and Salisbury replied that he had met the same engineers in Russia whom White had met and "I don't know any of them whom I would accept as a fully credible witness." Salisbury said he hadn't joined the "happy little band" /signers of the petition/ because he didn't believe in that sort of thing but agreed with other colleagues that the book "is not calculated to increase understanding of Russia in America--rather the reverse."[47] As late as 1949 Salisbury remained critical of White. In a review of White's later book, Land of Milk and Honey, Salisbury said White had

incorporated several incidents into his earlier book which didn't occur, and therefore it was difficult to evaluate this new book, which White had claimed to be "essentially true."[48]

Salisbury returned to Russia in 1949 as Moscow correspondent for the New York Times, a newspaper which had experienced trouble getting qualified and objective reporters into Russia. Salisbury soon became controversial and was accused of being too sympathetic to the Russians. Times biographer Gay Talese notes that Salisbury had been concerned at the censorship his stories experienced before being released by the Soviets. In addition, 1949-54 were Cold War years in the Unites States -- McCarthy years -- when trust in reports from Russia ran low and liberal views were highly suspect.[49]

White's position was considerably different from that of the other correspondents. He was not widely traveled in countries outside of Europe, and his stay in Russia was short. He had the distinctive advantage of returning to the United States and writing a book that did not have to pass Soviet censorship. In addition, he didn't plan to return to Russia before the war's end, and therefore did not have to be concerned about trying to pass future copy through an angered Soviet censor. Furthermore, White's biases had been clear before he traveled to Russia. In covering the Russo-Finnish War, White had expressed great sympathy for Finland, to the extent that he feared the Russians would not grant him a visa. He had grown up under the influence of a father who believed in and promoted a competitive, capitalistic ideology, and his roots were thoroughly Anglo-Saxon.[50] The psssages of the book which contained such bias were the ones that drew the most comment from his critics. For example, he described

how top officials' clothes "can't compare with those of a meeting of the Workers Alliance in my home town of Emporia, Kansas, at the bottom of our depression"[51] And speaking of a performance at Tchaikovsky Hall, he noted,

> Each act on the stage is introduced by an attractive brunette in a simply cut dress of gleaming white satin. By contrast with that shabby audience, she is a dream-princess, and so are the performers. . . . this drab socialist audience stares at the stage as though it were some unattainable fairyland.[52]

Like White, and like those who objected to the book, those who agreed with him also had made individual ideological choices. White received positive responses from those whose views ran from strongly anti-Communist to those who had been delighted with the promise of the Russian Revolution of 1917 but who had become disillusioned through the struggles of the 1930s. William Henry Chamberlin, Russian correspondent from 1922-34 for the Christian Science Monitor, and a contributing editor to the Wall Street Journal, who wrote The Russian Enigma in 1943, praised White's book in the Saturday Review forum as "the most truthful and realistic account of present-day Russia I have read for a long time." Chamberlin noted that White did not have to worry about Soviet censorship, since he returned before writing his book, and commended White for his stand "for democracy and human liberty." Chamberlin criticized the "abusers of White's book," as Communists, "fellow-travelers" and reviewers who "have been hypnotized into believing that the proper attitude for an unofficial American observer in Russia should be that of the blind, deaf and dumb monkey." Chamberlin's only criticism was that White might have made more allowances for the "impoverishing effects of war."[53] Chamberlin, avowedly anti-Communist in later years, blamed President Franklin Roosevelt for U.S. involvement in World War II, claiming that America lost much and gained little. He also accused Roosevelt of a "soft" policy toward Communism.[54]

Gabriel Javsicas of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company wrote to White, congratulating him on the book and bemoaning his own difficulties with the State Department, certain prominent Catholics and other groups due to his coverage of Spain:

> We are thus in the same boat, as it were. All totalitarian states are six of one and half a dozen of the other. But each has its intense partisans. To the ones Stalin can do no wrong because his Nazi and Fascist enemies are evil, but neither can Franco do wrong because the Bolshevists are evil. Thus one evil sustains the other and both gather disciples by claiming to be enemies.
>
> This mutual support of two apparent opposites is the most frightening phenomenon of our times. It has gone far to bring about a complete disintegration of intellectual honesty.[55]

Francis McCullagh, a former journalist in Russia, wrote to White saying that since she had written a book in 1923 describing religious persecution in Moscow she had never been allowed to return.[56]

Joseph Baird, of the Washington Evening Star, was chief of the United Press Bureau in Moscow from 1933 to 1936. He said there were "certain basic points in your book which certainly were true in 1933-36 and which I have every reason to believe are equally true today." Baird noted the low standard of living in Russia, Russian official suspicion of foreigners, fear from Russian citizens of the NKVD, technical backwardness, a magnificant ballet and opera, charming women, the tremendous resources and opportunities in Russia and that the "Kremlin's pretentions to democracy are ludicrous."[57]

John dos Passos wrote his congratulations, saying "A man certainly sticks his nose into a hornet's nest when he tries to make any sense in that direction." Dos Passos also took a strong anti-Communist position in the post-war years.[58]

Michael Karpovich, writing for the Yale Review, found it "difficult to understand the vehement objections with which Mr. White's book has been greeted in some quarters." Karpovich said he found some of White's generalizations doubtful, but said he found it to be an "essentially sincere and honest report," with an "air of authenticity about it."[59]

Henry Cassidy, AP bureau chief in Moscow, wrote to White that the Council had been after Maurice Hindus to sign the statement, but "he refused on the grounds that anyone ought to be able to say what he pleased." Hindus was in Russia for the New York Herald Tribune from 1942 until a few months before the end of the war. Although he was known to report on war conditions "with sympathy and insight," since the end of World War II and particularly after the Communist coup in Czechoslavakia in 1948, he became increasingly outspoken against the U.S.S.R. Cassidy also said he had talked to Snow a few days before the petition was published and "understood he was not going to sign. They must have rung him in my phone at the last minute." Cassidy remarked that he thought the Council and Pravda "are conspiring to make your book the best seller of the ages.... It makes wonderful advertising copy."[60]

James Wick, editor of "What's Happening in Washington," wrote White that he had been planning to accompany Everett Dirksen, the Illinois congressman, to Russia, but blamed White for his not being able to go. White's writings "made the Soviet government regret its lapse from the policy that no one enter Russia over whose writings it has no long term control," he said.[61]

Official and military criticism was mixed. White wrote in 1951 that he "was almost hounded out of New York on the charge of having told the truth about Russia. The State Department tried to bring pressure both on me and my publisher to suppress the book, but they did not succeed."[62] Letters from military personnel represented at Poltava cheered White onward, and Robert Nyburg, who had been stationed in Southern Iran, wrote:

> Of course we never got a complete fill in on what happened. We knew the mission was caught on the ground and wiped out. We heard that, afterward, a transport loaded with night fighters and AA at Naples sat there ten days and then was unloaded. The Russians finally refused entry even after Stalin said OK. The engine parts, oil and bombs were shipped to India and Italy and England. Some of the personnel from the Russian field came out through Iran. I met a couple of flyers in Teheran. They were very bitter at the Russian refusal to let us protect our bases, when they couldn't do it themselves. They said the Russians felt that to allow U.S. night fighters inside the U.S.S.R. would be such a loss of face they couldn't afford it. So our boys were killed and we lost fifty B-17s![63]

Another officerwrote that while "The Ruskies are naturally displeased," all other groups "are yelling 'bravo' vociferously." However a first lieutenant in France said he had never seen "such untimely and unjust criticism perpetuated against an ally' and called the book "un-Democratic."[64] And Captain Irving Reis wrote to William Chamberlin, calling White a "liar," and Chamberlin a "literary ass" for supporting White's conclusions.[65]

White's four major accounts later were considered highly significant. The establishment of an American Air Base at Poltava had been an important military advance, making it possible for American bombers to fly over Germany from bases in Italy, drop bombs, then land at Poltava in the Ukraine, where they could refuel and return over Germany to Italy. While White was at Poltava, a surprise German raid destroyed 45 bombers on the ground and killed two Americans and 20 Russians. White said he had noticed the Germany spotter planes earlier in the day, but had been reassured by an American pilot that bombers wouldn't be able to get through the sophisticated radar equipment. White later learned that gun crews, night fighters and radar had not been established because the Russians did not want to increase the number of Americans on the base.[66] In The First Casualty, Knightley documents that United States censors agreed with the Russians not to release news about the raid.[67]

The account of slave labor which White attributed to two engineers at Omsk was attacked primarily on the credibility of his sources. He wrote to Henry Haskell of the Star that he had changed the names and identity of the engineers, made them two instead of three, and changed the location of the interview to protect the engineers he had interviewed. White responded to Haskell's statement that "it is unfortunate that it (the interview) did not take place as was reported in a book which is supposed to be factual reporting," by saying that the only exceptions to the rule of facts is that "any reporter working in a totalitarian country such as Soviet Russia protects his sources of information and has an obligation to disguise the people so that they won't be shot or expelled from the country for giving him information." White said he had followed the same practice when he was in Germany in 1939, and at that time had been hailed by all the liberals and applauded for giving an "inside impression of Germany in spite of the rigid German censorship." White said he had just received a letter from the company which had employed the engineers saying that the men who had returned from Russia agreed fully with White's account.[68] In the post-war period other accounts of slave labor emerged from Russia.

In March of 1945, shortly after publication of the book, Eugene Lyons, editor of Pageant, wrote to White that he knew his account of the panic of Moscow in October of 1941 was "substantially true." Lyons had been in Russia six years and said he had started "with a deep set of prejudices in favor of the Soviet set-up; but that didn't detract from the volume and violence of the attacks on me." Lyons told White he had a manuscript on his desk written by Victor Kravchenko, who was a captain of Russian troops left in Moscow when,

because of the Germany advance, the government fled to Kuibyshev. "He gives intimate details," Lyons wrote, "the kind no man could invent, of panic, looting, open anti-Soviet talk." Lyons noted that the panic would be one

> "of those great events in blacked-out Russia that will be 'denied' for a long time until the facts can be admitted without loss of face. Let's remember that there were no foreign correspondents in Moscow at the time; they had been evacuated to Kuibishev. (sic) And there were no foreign diplomats. Your account, and Kravchenko's if and when it is published, will be the first information that the world will have on the subject.[69]

Kravchenko, whose book, I Chose Freedom, was published a few years later, had defected from the Russian purchasing mission in Washington. Knightley refers to the Moscow Panic as "the big skedaddle," with looting, stampedes to the railway station, officials fleeing in their cars, "and all the time a smell of burning documents." Although the incident was reported in part of October of 1942, the reports were never complete.[70]

The Katyn Forest Massacre was uncovered in 1943 when Germans revealed mass graves of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. The question was whether they were shot by the Russians in the spring of 1940 or whether they had been shot by Germans after the 1941 invasion. White said that most American accounts had previously "damned" the Germans, blaming the partisanship of the accounts on the Russian censor who deleted all qualifying phrases. White did not draw a conclusion, but did raise serious questions about the validity of the Russian claims.[71] Later accounts placed the responsibility for the murders strictly on Russian shoulders.[72]

White believed that much of the negative criticism would not have emerged had the book been published several months later than it was. In May of 1945

he wrote to Donald Adams, book editor of the New York Times, saying that friends had encouraged him to postpone publication for six months because they didn't think the public was ready to accept it. White said he decided to go ahead because "I was in possession of facts and of a story which the American people badly needed to know, for the sake of their own welfare and the future of our country." White said it also occurred to him that it was "not the duty of a writer to remain personally popular at all times. Now and then it is his duty to speak out firmly and tell the truth as he sees it, even though he realizes that he is bucking a current of public opinion and that the mob will be against him."[73] White also said he was shocked at American public opinion when he returned from Russia. Americans' "picture of Stalin was that he was a big, lovable, fun-loving Santa Claus to whom we were deeply in debt because he had been obliging enough to get a lot of Russians killed at Stalingrad to make it a comfortable war for us." White called such an outlook "dreamy and sentimental" and one which would make it impossible to "come out with a permanent peace settlement with the Russians."[74]

Public opinion began to turn not long after publication of the book, and in 1946, long after the furor had died down, White wrote a response to his critics, on the occasion of Brooks Atkinson returning from Russia "muttering that the Kremlin doesn't want our friendship."[75] "Well, boys," White asked, "where is your petition denouncing Brooks?"

White answered his own questions, claiming that Russia had not changed but was . . .

> still the same country under the same leadership which we saw during the war. But snuffling sentimentality on that subject is not so popular either on the lecture platform or in the Cub Room of the Stork Club, as it was a year ago. So a little job of character-assassination on Brooks Atkinson will take real courage. And no one can accuse you today of capitalizing on temporary mob-hysteria to smear a colleague: quite the contrary, in fact.

"So up, boys, and at him! Massage your tear glands and start sobbing that he has deliberately insulted the heroes of Stalingrad.

Why are you hanging back?""[76]

The significance of the analysis of the here-to-fore untold story of this highly controversial book and criticism of it lies in its relationship to the interrelated issues of ideology, objectivity and the role of the reporter during war-time. Objectivity is a difficult issue to address. In regard to Report on the Russians and the criticism of it, the issue was not one of who was right or who was wrong, since such judgments are misleading at best and obscure most of the issues. The point is that media personnel are affected by many of the same pressures that affect individuals during war-time, and that media reports, like public opinion, may be emotionally charged and reflect individual backgrounds and personal commitments of writers and correspondents. White, in Report on the Russians, obviously wrote from his own perspective, and those who critiqued him were speaking from varying points of view and varying ideological frameworks. In addition, correspondents in Russia naturally may have been discouraged when, while they were faced with day-to-day censorship difficulties, White left Russia and wrote in relative freedom.

War reporting also was complicated by national interests and a U.S. change of political position relative to the Soviet Union. One problem for reporters was the desire to be patriotic, to protect national interests and to promote any possibility for peace after the war. A second problem was that Russia had been designated an enemy shortly before it became an ally, and American writers who in earlier years had sympathized with the Russian Revolution had been discredited, harrassed and sometimes imprisoned by their own government. The 1930s had produced high levels of criticism of Stalin's purges. Then,

almost instantaneously, the U.S. government and educated leaders saw a need not only to maximize national interests but to create ideological consistency between the U.S.S.R. and the United States as well.

Bill White's experience is a documentation of the strength of public opinion in volatile times and a reminder that the role of the press is not to promote ideological consistency or schism, nor to aid in government manipulation, but to clarify events and issues. The media in the Bill White case attempted to obtain balance by publishing a variety of opinions, and while diversity is an essential component of a free press, in this case variety did not always produce clarity because reporters confused their own roles with the desire to protect national interests and further particular ideological goals.

FOOTNOTES

1. For criticism by John Hersey see Louis Fischer, John Hersey, Maurice Hindus, "W.L. White on the Russians," The Saturday Review, 14 April 1945, pp. 21-22. For criticism by Harrison Salisbury see exchanges between Salisbury and W.L. White, Salisbury to White, 21 March 1945 and 29 May 1945; White to Salisbury, 7 April 1945, all from Kathrine White's private collection of W.L. White correspondence (hereafter referred to as W.L. White collection.) See also Canadian Tribune 30 December 1944, and White to Jane Cadwell, 16 October 1951, W.L. White collection.

2. White to Henry J. Haskell, 3 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

3. Interview with Kathrine White, 1981. See also postcard in W.L. White collection.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. Richard Lauterback to White, 19 March 1945, White to Salisbury, 7 April 1945, W.L. White collection; "W.L. White on Russians," Saturday Review, 14 April 1945; Bruce Bliven, "Emporia Goes to Moscow," The New Republic, 19 March 1945, pp. 391-92; Kathrine White to Bill Stroock, 24 January 1949, W.L. White collection; "Johnston Defends Reds," New York Times, 15 March 1945; "Books of the Times," New York Times, 15 March 1945; Harry Hansen column, New York World Telegram, 15 March 1945; Book Review Section, "W.L. White on Russia," New York Times, 18 March 1945; Michael Karpovich, Yale Review 34 (Summer 1945): 759-60; Markoosha Fischer, "Report on the Russians," The Nation 14 April 1945, p. 160.

6. Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1975); John Lewis Gaddis, The United States and the Origin of The Cold War, 1941-47 (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 45.

7. Ibid., p. 34.

8. John Lent, "Foreign News in American Media," Journal of Communication 27 (Winter 1977); pp. 46-51.

9. R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965) p. 726.

10. Gaddis, Origin of the Cold War, pp. 5-17.

11. Gaddis, Origin of the Cold War, p. 33.

12. Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow, pp. 511-552. Quoted in Gaddis, Origin of the Cold War, p. 34.

13. Ibid.

14. Gaddis, Origin of the Cold War, p. 38

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 42.

17. Eric A. Johnston, "W.L. White on the Russians," Saturday Review, 14 April 1945, p. 66.

18. Bliven, The New Republic, 19 March 1945, p. 392.

19. Book Review, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 240 (July 1945): p. 152.

20. Associated Press wire story, 9 December 1944. See also William Henry Chamberlin, "W.L. White and His Critics," The American Mercury, May 1945, p. 625.

21. Letterhead used by National Council of Soviet-American Friendship and Massachusetts branch. See also White to Arthur Capper, 30 May 1945, W.L. White private collection, and NCASF entry in Encyclopedia of Associations, Denise Akey, ed. Vol. 1 16th ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1981, p. 1005.

22. Frederick Woltman,"Red Pressure Group Hits White Soviet Book," New York World Telegram, 21 May 1945.

23. White to Capper, 30 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

24. White to Capper, 16 July 1945, W.L. White collection.

25. White to Edmund Wilson, 27 November 1945, W.L. White collection.

26. George Moorad to White, 8 March 1945, W.L. White collection.

27. Ibid.

28. Text issued by National Council of Soviet-American Friendship.

29. Chamberlin, "White and Critics," American Mercury, May, 1945, p. 629. See also Knightley, First Casualty.

30. The Truth About W.L.White: The Book the Nazis Like (New York: National Council of Soviet-American Friendship) 1944.

31. Dirk Struik to Lambert Davis and to Reader's Digest, 12 January 1945, W.L. White collection.

32. Ibid.

33. Kathrine White to W.L. White, n.d., W.L White collection; J. Donald Adams, New York Times, cited in Reader's Digest, July 1945.

34. Reader's Digest to Struik, W.L. White collection.

35. Unsigned letter to White, 30 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

36. Alexander Werth, Russia at War (London: Barrier and Rockliffe, 1964) p. 179, cited in Knightley, First Casualty, p. 666.

37. Knightley, First Casualty, p. 266.

38. W.L. White, "Report on the Critics," Saturday Review, 5 October 1946, pp. 15-17, 38.

39. Quentin Reynolds, Only the Stars Are Neutral (London: Cassell, 1942) p. 200, cited in Knightley, First Casualty, p. 251. See also Kunitz, Twentieth Century Authors, first supplement, p. 823-24.

40. Knightley, First Casualty, p. 251.

41. Kunitz, ed. Twentieth Century Authors, first supplement, p. 934.

42. Ibid., p. 440; W.A. Swanberg, Luce and His Empire (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) p. 246.

43. "W.L. White on the Russians," The Saturday Review, 14 April 1945, p. 21.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Alexander Kendrick, "Bill White's Bazooka," The Nation, 7 April 1945, p. 384.

47. Salisbury to White, 21 March 1945; White to Salisbury, 7 April 1945; Salisbury to White, 29 May 1949, all W.L. White collection.

48. Salisbury, New York Star, 9 January 1949.

49. Gay Talese, The Kingdom and the Power (New York: World Publishing Co.)

50. For information about William Allen White's ideology see Jean Lange Kennedy (Folkerts), "William Allen White: A Study of the Interrelationship of Press, Power and Party Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Kansas, 1981).

51. W.L. White, Report on the Russians, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1945), p. 25.

52. Ibid., p. 24.

53. Kunitz, ed. Twentieth Century Authors, first supplement, pp. 184-85. "W.L. White on the Russians," The Saturday Review, 14 April 1945, p. 23.

54. Kunitz, ed. Twentieth Century Authors, first supplement, pp. 184-185.

55. Gabriel Javsicas to White, 28 March 1945, W.L. White collection.

56. Francis McCullagh to White, 13 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

57. Joseph H. Baird to White, 9 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

58. John dos Passos to White, 26 April 1945, W.L. White collection. For a description of dos Passos as a disillusioned former radical see Twentieth Century Authors Supplement, p. 284; "Inevitably, evaluations of dos Passos' writing have become confused with evaluations of his politics - his anti-Communism, his steady drift from the political Left to the Right, his bitterness and his pessimism."

59. Michael Karpovich, "Three Books on Soviet Russia," Yale Review 34: (Summer 1945) p. 759.

60. Henry Cassidy to White, n.d., W.L. White collection. See also Twentieth Century Authors Supplement, pp. 148-49.

61. Janes L. Wick to White, 16 April 1945, W.L. White collection.

62. White to Jane Cadwell, 16 October 1951, W.L. White collection.

63. Robert S. Nyburg to White, 3 February 1949, W.L. White collection.

64. Clyde D. Ware to White, 27 January 1945, W.L. White collection.

65. Captain Irving Reis to Wm. Henry Chamberlin, 31 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

66. White, Report on Russians, pp. 179-197. See also Robert S. Nyburg to White, 3 February 1949, W.L. White collection.

67. Knightley, First Casualty, p. 263.

68. White to Haskell, 3 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

69. Eugene Lyons to White, 18 March 1945, W.L. White collection.

70. Knightley, First Casualty, p. 250.

71. White, Report on Russians, p. 127-134.

72. Knightley, First Casualty, p.

73. White to J. Donald Adams, 3 May 1945, W.L. White collection.

74. White to June Hamilton Rhodes, 16 March 1948, W.L. White collection.

75. White, "Report on Critics," Saturday Review, 5 October 1946, p. 38.

76. Ibid.